(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) to (e) The visit was exploratory in nature to mutually understand import and export operations of iron ore in each other's country.

National Steel Policy

1195. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalized a new National Steel Policy;

(b) if so, whether the same has been posted on the Ministry's website; and

(c) whether steel decontrol being there for years now, Government would consider winding up of the Joint Plant Committee and other obsolete licensing/control bodies to lend transparency at par with global steel industry standards?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Expenditure Reforms Commission (ERC) in its 6th Report had recommended winding up of the Joint Plant Committee (JPC) and the office of the Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel (DCI&S). In pursuance of these recommendations the DCI&S organisation was closed w.e.f. 23rd May 2003. The JPC is not performing any licensing/control function. In view of certain vital functions, related to collection and analysis of data related to the steel sector, being perfomed by JPC, the Government is not contemplating its closure.

Status of POSCO

1196. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the status of POSCO project of Orissa cleared by the PMO in April, 2005;

(b) whether it is a fact that National Advisory Council is not in favour of implementing the project;

(c) whether the Minstry of Mines has also objected to this project; and

(d) by when the final decision is expected to be made public regarding the fate of the project?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) As the steel industry is delicenced and deregulated, no prior permission of the Union Government is required to set up steel plants in the country except for certain locational restrictions. POSCO has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Orissa on 22nd June 2005 to set up a steel plant of 12 million tonnes per annum capacity. To implement the project POSCO has formed an Indian company.

(b) The National Advisory Council had sought certain clarifications on this project. The response has been furnished on the basis of reply received from the State Government of Orissa.

(c) and (d) The Ministry of Mines is yet to receive any proposal for grant of prospecting licence or mining lease for iron ore in case of the POSCO project.

Steel Policy

1197. DR. M.A.M.RAMASWAMY:
SHRI DATTA MEGHE:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have announced a new Steel Policy aiming at making the domestic Industry globally competitive;

(b) the salient feature of this Steel Policy; and

(c) how far the interests of Small Iron Ore mine owners have been protected in this new Steel Policy?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The salient features of the draft National Steel Policy (NSP) is given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(c) The National Steel Policy (NSP) seeks to remove the supply-side constraints, including those in the availability of iron ore, by encouraging investments in creation of an additional modern mining and beneficiation capacity of 200 mT. State goverments would recommend renewal of existing leases only against credible mining investment plans in a specified period. The Goverment would lay down priorities and guidelines for the State goverments to recommed fresh mining leases, having regard to the entrepreneur's mining investment plans, and technical and financial capabilities. Environmental and forest clearances would be granted within a pre-specified time frame. Though local value addition would be given priority, the Goverment would encourage iron ore trading in order to make this essential raw material available to the iron and steel industry throughout the